

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN REMEMBRANCE OF SUMGAI, KIROVABAD AND BAKU MAS-SACRES

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I met with a constituent, Marat Khoudabakhshiev, whose family barely survived pogroms perpetrated 27 years ago today against the Armenian residents of then-Soviet Azerbaijan. He recounted how Azerbaijanis who had lived alongside Armenians for generations suddenly turned violent against them, causing Armenian families like his to flee their homes for safety.

Over three days, February 26th to 28th, 1988, a pogrom was perpetrated against the Armenian residents of Sumgait in then-Soviet Azerbaijan. Armenians were attacked and killed in their apartments and on the streets. Although official figures reported 30 deaths, it is believed that hundreds were murdered and injured as a result of the pogrom.

The violence against the Armenians in Sumgait was prompted by a vote, which took place one week prior by the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh, to unify the region with Armenia—the beginning of the Karabakh movement. In the days immediately after this vote Azeri civilians and local officials in the city of Sumgait held rallies calling for “death to Armenians”.

On the night of February 27, 1988, Armenian residents in Sumgait were targeted and indiscriminately raped, mutilated and murdered. Calls for help from Armenians were ignored by local police and city officials. Journalists were shut out from the area. The violence raged on for three days before Soviet troops were able to put an end to the pogrom.

Witnesses of the horrific massacres later testified that the attacks were planned, as civilians had gathered weapons and the exits of the cities were blocked in advance to prevent Armenians from escaping. The homes of Armenians were marked so that the Azeri mobs could easily target them.

Unfortunately, the perpetrators of the pogrom succeeded in their ultimate goal—driving out Armenians. Fearing more violence, Armenian families fled Sumgait. Later that year, another anti-Armenian pogrom occurred in Kirovabad, Azerbaijan from November 21st to 27th, which also forced hundreds of Armenians to flee the region. In January of 1990 violent mobs targeted the Armenian community of Azerbaijan's capital, Baku.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the commemoration of the first genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide. It is imperative that we honor the memory of Armenians killed in the pogroms of Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku, as well as the Armenian Genocide. If we hope to stop future massacres, we must acknowledge these horrific events and ensure they do not happen again.

Recognizing the ethnic-cleansing of the Armenians from Azerbaijan is an important step. However, we need to do more—we need to demonstrate to Azerbaijan that the United States is committed to peace and to the protection of Artsakh from coercion.

As the current government of Azerbaijan grows even more hostile towards Armenians, we must call for an end to all threats and acts of violence by Azerbaijan's government against the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh.

Congress should strengthen Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act by removing the President's ability to waive U.S. law prohibiting aid to Azerbaijan because of its continuing blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. In 1992, Congress prohibited aid to Azerbaijan because of its continuing blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. However, in 2001, Congress approved a waiver to this provision, and administrations have used the waiver since then to provide aid to Baku. Azerbaijan should not be provided aid from the United States as long as they continue a policy of threats and blockades against Artsakh.

I urge the Administration to remove all barriers to broad-based U.S.-Nagorno Karabakh governmental and civil society communication, travel and cooperation.

HONORING NOREEN EVANS

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague, MIKE THOMPSON, to recognize California Senator Noreen Evans, who recently retired on November 30, 2014 following twenty-one years of public service.

Senator Evans has a distinguished record of serving the North Coast as a public servant and community leader. She has devoted her career to protecting the North Coast's invaluable natural resources, reforming the California legal system, and advocating for the rights of underserved communities, especially women and children.

Ms. Evans began her career in public service on the Santa Rosa Planning Commission and continued this service as a member of the Santa Rosa City Council before serving three terms in the California State Assembly and one term in the California State Senate. As an Assemblymember, Ms. Evans took on key roles as a Majority Whip, Human Services Committee Chair, and Budget Committee Chair. In the Senate, Ms. Evans led the Senate Banking and Finance Committee, the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Legislative Women's Caucus, and the Senate Select Committee on Wine. Ms. Evans used her leadership positions to champion local issues as well as statewide policy and was able to forge bipartisan consensus among her colleagues.

In addition to her time in elected office, Ms. Evans has practiced law for more than twenty years and litigated before both state and federal courts, up to the United States Supreme Court. In 2011, she became the first woman to receive the Defender of Justice Award from the Judicial Council of California.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that we honor Noreen Evans upon her retirement from the California State Senate for her tireless work representing the North Coast by protecting its valuable natural resources and championing its people. We express our deep appreciation to Noreen Evans for her exemplary public service, and convey our best wishes to Ms. Evans and her family as she pursues new endeavors.

RECOGNIZING ANNIE GALLAGHER

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Annie Gallagher, Public Affairs Specialists with the Philadelphia Region Social Security Administration for her 23 years of service to our nation and to congratulate her on her announced retirement.

Annie Gallagher, in her role as the Public Affairs Specialist at the Philadelphia Regional Office, provided assistance to a countless number of my constituents, as well as Virginians across the region and the Commonwealth. Her dedication and extraordinary commitment in providing solutions to those in need has been a credit to the Social Security Administration, which she has faithfully served for the past 13 years. Her efforts on behalf of the public have been in keeping with the highest standards of public service.

I congratulate Annie on a well-deserved retirement and wish her the best as she begins the next chapter in her life.

HONORING JUAN OSORIO ORTIZ, MR. AMIGO OF THE 78TH ANNUAL CHARRO DAYS FIESTA

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Juan Osorio Ortiz who has been named Mr. Amigo 2014. A Mexican television actor and producer, Juan Osorio Ortiz's distinguished career spans almost three decades.

This year from February 22 through March 1, the cities of Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, will come together to celebrate the 78th Annual Charro Days Fiesta.

Charro Days unites the bi-cultural, bi-literate and bi-national communities of Brownsville and Matamoros to commemorate our way of

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